



Establishing food premises



Good to know

Restaurants, cafes, food shops, kiosks, production plants and food storage facilities are food premises, which are subject to the requirements in the food legislation.

These guidelines tell briefly what must be taken into consideration in establishing food premises.

In planning activities, it is a good idea to ask the health or food inspector for advice at the Environment Centre tel. (09) 310 14000. If you intend to make structural changes in food premises, you must also contact the Building Control Department and the Rescue Department. Contact information is provided at the end of these guidelines.

The guidelines, which contain information regarding the establishment of restaurants and cafes, are on the Environment Centre's website at www.hel.fi/ymk.

What are food premises?

The Food Act (23/2006, amendment 352/2011) defines food premises as "any building or premises or part thereof, or other outdoor or indoor space, in which food meant for sale or conveyance is prepared, stored, transported, marketed, served or otherwise handled". This includes restaurants, cafes, pubs, shops, pizzerias, bakeries, kiosks, market stalls, meat cutting plants and food storage facilities, among other things.

Food premises also include activities, whose purpose is to transport food or store food in a vehicle or container or the import or export of foodstuffs.

Notification of food premises

A food business operator must send a written notification to the Environment Centre at the latest four weeks before starting or substantially changing the activities of the food premises. In Helsinki, the notifications should be sent to the Environment Centre (P.O. Box 500, 00099 City of Helsinki; street address Viikinkaari 2 A, Helsinki).

Food premises handling foodstuffs of animal origin must apply for approval of the food premises as a production establishment according to the Hygiene Regulation before they enter the retail market. The approvals should be sent to the Environment Centre, if the food premises is located in the area of Helsinki.

These guidelines concern only the food premises required to make a notification.

Content of a notification

A notification to establish food premises must indicate the following:

- the food business operator's name, domicile, contact information
- business ID or personal ID number
- the location of the food premises and street address
- a description of the product range and activities
- the estimated time to start the activity in the food premises
- the information about in-house control plan

The operator of a market place or another outdoor space needs to make a notification of the food premises including description of the activities practised there. The control authority can ask the operator for necessary additional information for handling the notification, such as the intended use of the place according to building control, and the number of customer seats.

Handling of a notification

The Environment Centre as Helsinki's food control authority receives the notifications of the food premises. The handling of the notification includes the recording of information from the notification to a database maintained by the control authority, and an initial risk assessment of the food premise based on the information given in the notification. The control authority sends the business operator a certificate that the notification has been handled.

Charges

The Environment Centre collects a charge for handling a notification. The charge corresponds to average handling costs.

Charges are also collected for the costs of inspections, sampling and tests conducted according to the municipal food control plan. The number of inspections and samples depends on risk assessment and the effectiveness of operator's in-house control. Effective in-house control reduces the need for official control and thus lowers charges.

In-house control

On the basis of EU regulations, the Food Act requires that each food business operator is aware of the health risks involved in handling food and prepares an in-house control plan to prevent risks.

Effective in-house control ensures food quality and satisfied customers and builds a good image. Authorities monitor the implementation of in-house control plans and provide guidance. There are different models to help prepare in-house control plans, such as the Finnish Grocery Trade Association's (FGTA) guidelines for shops and the Finnish Hospitality Association's (MaRa ry) guidelines for restaurants. Additional information can be obtained from the Environment Centre's health and food inspectors tel. (09) 310 14000, or the Environment Centre's website at www.hel.fi/ymk.

Change of operator, interrupting and ending activities

If the operator of food premises changes, the Environment Centre must be informed without delay. The new operator is responsible for informing the Environment Centre. There is no charge for this. An operator intending to interrupt or end activities in food a premise must inform the Environment Centre. Additional information can be obtained from the Environment Centre's health and food inspector.

Legislation

- Food Act (23/2006, amendment 352/2011)
- Government Decree on Food Control (420/2011)

Acts and Decrees are available at www.finlex.fi (Finnish legislation database)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

City of Helsinki Environment Centre

(notification of food premises, food control, in-house control plan)

Advice concerning food

tel. (09) 310 14000

P.O. Box 500, 00099 City of Helsinki

street address: Viikinkaari 2 A, 00790 Helsinki

e-mail: ymk@hel.fi

www.hel.fi/ymk

City of Helsinki Building Control Department

(construction of food premises and structural changes)

tel. (09) 310 26363

P.O. Box 2300, 00099 City of Helsinki

street address: Siltasaarenkatu 13, 00530 Helsinki

e-mail: rakennusvalvonta@hel.fi

www.rakvv.hel.fi

City of Helsinki Rescue Department

(fire and personal safety)

tel. (09) 310 31203, Fire Inspector in Duty

P.O. Box 112, 00099 City of Helsinki

street address: Korkeavuorenkatu 26, 00130 Helsinki

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